

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Apparatus and method for performing surgical procedures within the mediastinum, ~~in particular or~~ within the pericardium, are described. ~~An include an~~ endoscopic cannula ~~having a cannula with at least one lumen, a transparent tip, and an endoscope, that~~ is introduced into the mediastinum and optionally into the pericardium via a ~~single~~ subxiphoid incision. A cavity may be initially dilated for advancing the endoscopic cannula using a dilating tool having an inner cannula and an outer expansible sheath, ~~wherein the~~ that is ~~expansible sheath to~~ exerts a laterally expansive force against the surrounding tissue, ~~creating a working cavity to allow larger instruments such as the endoscopic cannula to be introduced into the mediastinum.~~ ~~Other surgical~~ Surgical instruments, ~~for example a such as a~~ pericardial entry device ~~for providing entry through the pericardium, are then are~~ inserted into a lumen of the endoscopic cannula. ~~Where operation on the heart is desired, the pericardial entry device is used, which includes a grasping tool and a cutting tool and is advanced through the single incision into the expansible sheath.~~ ~~Once a~~ to grasp a flap of the pericardium, ~~is grasped, the and a~~ cutting tool is extended ~~and to~~ cuts cut the flap, ~~and creating~~ to create a small opening ~~into through~~ which other surgical tools may be introduced. The endoscopic cannula can then be advanced inside the pericardium ~~and to~~ access all regions of the heart ~~may be accessed by sweeping the endoscopic cannula around the heart. Once the~~

endoscopic cannula is in the desired position, other Other surgical instruments may  
then be inserted through the opening to perform surgical procedures within the  
pericardium.

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